

Preface

There is extant in Pārsīg literature a controversial book entitled *šak-ud-gumānīgīh-vizār*, lit. ‘doubt-removing’¹. The author of this book is Mardānfarrox son of Ohrmazddād. Nothing has been found about him elsewhere. He has described himself as a suitor and researcher of truth who did not like to follow a religion by inheritance, but he sought that which is more reliable and acceptable before the philosophy and logic. He claimed to have travelled in many foreign lands and islands, although he only mentioned the name of India. He met many different sects, examined other doctrines, and read other scriptures. He then fell into “the depths of the gloom and ill-solvable doubtfulness”, and it seems that the doctrine of Mani seduced him more, until a time when, owing to the books and memoranda of the wise Magi, he “escaped from much doubtfulness, error and deceit of doctrines.” Mardānfarrox first wrote a small pamphlet that consisted of a number of inquiries, suggested, in a friendly manner, by a sceptic, a certain Mihrayyār, of Spāhān, and answered by him (Chapter one). Thereafter, he determined to write a treatise for removing the doubts of neophytes concerning the Mazdayasnian religion, in contrast with its opponents.

Mardānfarrox wrote the doubt-removing book from the writings of the previous high-priests, and inserted two chapters of the Dēnkird, which are not found in the portion of the Dēnkird known to be extant: one, probably from the first two books (XII); and the other, from the third book (IX). He mentioned also Rōšn, son of Ādarfarrōbay, and quoted some sayings from his book, the **Rōšn nibēg** ‘the Book of Light/ Rōšn’. He used the *hufravard* ‘deceased’ for Rōšn, and not for his father. It seems that Rōšn was not living when Ādarfarrōbay deceased; and, for this reason, the younger of the two brothers, Zardušt

¹ . The term شک و گمان /*šak-ud-gumānīgīh-vizār*/ ‘doubt-removing’ is the Pārsīg name applied to an apologetics by its author. Unfortunately the original Pārsīg text has not survived up to now.

Neryōsang Dhaval who possessed a copy of it, made a transcription into Pāzand, and subsequently a translation into Sanskrit. He erroneously called the book *Škaṇḍ-gumaṇī-vazār* / *Skanda-gumānī-gujāra*. But *škaṇḍ-gumānīg* as a compound is non-sense, whereas the words *šak* and *gumān* are synonymous, and we often find them put jointly in Persian texts, for example: Ms MU 29, 83 شک و گمان /*šak ud gumān*/, Persian AVN (Ms Khudabakhsh L. n° 3771, fol. 59a) شک و گمان, Persian Rivāyāt (Ms Khudabakhsh L. n° 3771, fol. 12a) شک و گمان. The word *šak* is an Arabic loan word: Arab. شك /*šakk*/ ‘doubt; mistrust; suspicion’. However, one may see in the Arabic word *šakk* a dialect form of Skt. *śaṅka*- m. ‘doubt; fear’.

Šak-ud-gumānīgīh-vizār as name of the book of Mardān-farrox resembles Skt. *vimati-cchedaka*- ‘doubt-expelling’ as epithet of the Jina. The *vizār* is used in other compounds: *frašn-vizār* ‘riddle-solving’, *xāmn-vizār* ‘interpreter of dreams’, etc. For *gumān-vizār* ‘doubt-removing’, cf. Dk iv M 424 *harvisp-āgāh ī gumān-vizār*, DD 38.15 *xārrah ī gumān-vizār ī abēzag dēn*.¹ The proposition of Sheriarji D. Bharucha is interesting : « The meaning of the original Pahlavi name, if we decipher it Shak-i-Gumānīk-vijār, would be “convincer of the sceptic’s doubts (regarding the truthfulness of Zoroastrian religion)” ». » *Collected Sanskrit Writings of the Parsis*, Part IV, Bombay, 1913, Preface.

succeeded his father Ādarfarrōbay as *hudēnān pēšobāy* ‘the leader of those of the good religion’. It is, then, probable that Mardānfarrox’s book was written after the time of Rōšn, but not in the time of Zardušt, that is, some time during the reign of Ma’mūn (before A.D. 833).

The original Pārsīg text of the ŠGV has not yet been discovered. It was transcribed into Pāzand and subsequently translated into Sanskrit by Neryosang son of Dhaval. Some manuscripts contain the PArslg version of the earlier part of the book (usually I-V), but it seems to be a later attempt at reproducing the extant Pāzand text in PArslg. There are also a few existing copies of an old Gujarati version, and a Persian paraphrase of the Prelude (I. 1-31).

Contents

Some questions

In this chapter Mardānfarrox answers to three questions suggested to him, in a friendly manner, by a certain Mihrayyār from Spāhān. The first question and its answer resemble the question put forward by Kavi Vištāspa and Jāmāspa's answer in the second chapter of the Ayyādgar ī Jāmāsp. The treatment of the planets in this chapter agrees with the "Greater" Bundahišn. (II, III, IV)

Criticism of the Atheists

The second chapter consists of Mardānfarrox's criticism of atheism, in its both forms, the Persian Daharī doctrine and the Greek Sophism, and an attempt to prove the divine existence. In discussing the divine management of the universe and care for man a number of details are introduced in connection with logic, and the physiology of man. The logical section is a brief rendering of the modes of knowledge; these modes are applied to prove the existence of the Yazata. Karaka has shown the analogy between the argument of Mardānfarrox and the argument of the Stoic philosopher Quintus Lucilius Balbus (40- B.C.) in the dialogue of Cicero, called the *De Natura Deorum*, wherein the human eye is taken as an instance to show the well-order of the universe. (V, VI)

The existence of the contrary

The third chapter deals with the existence of the contrary which is of different substance (VII) and of different principle (VIII).

The existence of the Antagonist before the creation

Mardānfarrox quotes a whole chapter of the Dēnkird. In that portion of the Dēnkird known to be extant, which treats of a multitude of subjects, we don't find the materials for this chapter. However, the title of the chapter is actually found in the third book of the Dēnkird, M262:

ابار استیہ د دامنہ ہستار و د پشہ ہستار از دامنہ
abar astīh ī dām hamēstār ud pēšīh ī hamēstār az dām

It seems that this chapter has been pulled out of the manuscript which was later used by Ādarbād ī Emēdān. This chapter deals with a double problem concerning the Antagonist (or, the Opponent): he existed before the creation of the creatures; and the struggle against him was the very motive of the divine act of creation. (IX)

The speculation of the monists and the demonstration of dualism

The whole dissertation culminates in a demonstration of two principles. The different doctrines are classified in two original ones, one monist, the other dualist. The creator is explained in his three "functions", that is, the creation and religion and (salvation of) soul. Then Mardānfarrox describes his religious quest, and how he escaped from doubtfulness, especially from the alien faith of Mani and the heresy of "those who wear the sacred mask" –probably, an esoteric

tendency among the Zoroastrians, like the actual Khshnoom heresy among the Parsis. (X)

Islam

Four virtues are requisite for godhead: omniscience, omnipotence, goodness, and mercifulness. Monotheism, and especially Islam, traces both good and evil to a divinity whose attributes are incompatible with the latter. Allah fails to be a divinity worthy of worship. (XI)

« Ce chapitre, le plus long et le plus mal composé de tout l'ouvrage, est, à certains égards, le plus intéressant. La théologie musulmane y est prise à partie, l'auteur renvoyant dos à dos motazélites et ašarites, invoquant, contre les premiers, les textes qoraniques qui affirment l'action de Dieu sur tout ce qui est, contre les seconds, les arguments des motazélites (et des sceptiques) en quête d'explication du mystère du mal. Le commentaire permettra de juger de la fidélité de ce texte comme témoignage de l'extérieur sur le grand débat de la théologie musulmane. » Menasce, 125

From the Dēnkird

This is the only chapter of the first two books of the Dēnkird that has been preserved. Mardānfarrox has cited it by way of authority after the chapter on Islam. It is about the inconsistent discourses of the Muslim doctrines as regards God, and concludes that Islam is incompatible with a measured religion. (XII)

Judaism

Mardānfarrox proceeds to a polemical critique of Judaism. James Darmesteter who translated it into French in his "Textes pehlvis relatifs au judaïsme" (1889), concerning its place in the criticisms of Judaism and its Scriptures said thus: « Cette réfutation est plus ancienne qu'aucune des refutations chrétiennes du moyen âge. Elle en diffère absolument, comme on pouvait s'y attendre, d'esprit et de caractère. Le Chrétien en polémique contre le juif est en réalité sur la défensive, car il admet tout ce qu'admet le Juif ; sa croyance n'existe que par celle du Juif ; seulement, il admet en plus, et c'est là sa seule raison d'être, des choses que le Juif repousse, parce qu'il ne les trouve pas dans le texte commun, de sorte qu'en réalité le polémiste chrétien, en ayant l'air d'attaquer, ne fait que se défendre et se justifier.

La position du Parsi est tout autre. Il n'a rien de commun avec le Juif et juge sa croyance avec ses propres lumières et ses propres principes. Sa position est celle du libre penseur, toutes les fois qu'il ne fait pas intervenir – fort imprudemment sans doute, s'il a trouvé qui riposte – ses propres principes métaphysiques et autres. Aussi, bien des passages des pages suivantes auraient pu être écrites par Celse et les auteurs des contre-évangiles et semblent des fragments de la Bible enfin expliquée, remanié à l'orientale. L'auteur déploie d'ailleurs une réelle force de logique et de dialectique, qualité ordinaire chez les théologiens de toute religion quand ils ont l'offensive.

L'intérêt de curiosité n'est pas le seul qu'offrent ces textes. Ils en offrent un autre plus sérieux : c'est un élément nouveau dans l'histoire de l'exégèse biblique en Orient. D'où sont prises les nombreuses

citations de la Bible que contient la réfutation du docteur Parsi ? Il est peu vraisemblable qu'il les ait tiré directement du texte hébreu : il avait donc sous les yeux une traduction au moins partielle de la Bible ? Quelle est cette traduction ? Y avait-il une traduction pehlvi de la Bible ? A quelle école d'exégèse se rattachait-elle et se ramène-elle à une branche connue ? D'où a-t-il pris les *midrashim* étranges du second chapitre ? » (4-5)

The question of the source of Mardānfarrox's biblical knowledge and quotations has been discussed by Lewis H. Gray (1906), Pierre Jean de Menasce (1945) and Jacob Neusner (1963, 1966). On this issue, Jacob Neusner states: « The importance of this question transcends the problem of the use of Hebrew Scriptures by Mardānfarrox. Frank Cross and William Brownlee both speculate on whether Babylonian Jews possessed textual traditions different from those of Palestine. We know that Alexandrian Jewry did, for we know their translation of Scripture, indicating numerous textual traditions different from those in Palestine. ...

One may reasonably infer that if Babylonian Jewry possessed academies, and that if it was necessary for these academies to produce translations or renditions of Scripture into language spoken by Jews in the Iranian Empire, then, as in Alexandria, specific textual traditions *may* have been preserved likewise by such Babylonian Jewish academies.

We may be quite certain that such academies did flourish by the first century A.D. and afterward, for we know that Hillel and nahum the Mede, both of Babylonian origin, came to Palestine with substantial knowledge of traditional sciences. We know also that in Babylonian academies, specific textual interpretations (*midrašim*) were handed down, as the midrashic tradition on Deut. 15.10 proves. On that verse, similar interpretations were preserved at the academy at Huṣal, in the 2nd century, handed down by the disciples of R. Ishmael, who had settled there about 135 A.D., to R. Aḥa and Ḥiyya of the next generation (ca. 180 A.D.), to R. Naḥman a century later. We know likewise that the Babylonian teacher, Rav, taught his uncle R. Ḥiyya “the laws of the Babylonians”, that R. Nathan possessed a collection of *mishnayot* from Babylonia, that R. Ḥiyya gave an interpretation of the expression *wayehi* (yHyw) which, he said, had been handed down from the Exile period, and that a Babylonian exegete, R. Ḥanina b. Ḥama, corrected a scriptural reading by R. Judah the Prince of Ezek. 7.16, a correction based upon the tradition of R. Hamnuna the Scribe of Babylonia. All of this points to the probability of Babylonian Jewish traditions of exegesis and, possibly, of text, different from those of the Palestinians. Furthermore, the following tradition, found in Bab. Talmud Shabbat 115a, may refer to translations or transcriptions of Scripture into Egyptian (Coptic), Median, and Elamite, among other languages or scripts: “If written in Coptic,

Median, 'YBRYT (Hebrew?), Elamite, or Greek, even though one may not read in them, they should be saved from burning". » (415)

The first part (XIII) essentially contains an epitome of stories of creation and the fall of Adam as described in the Genesis, and Mardānfarrox's objections.

The second part (XIV) is about the qualities of Adonai as described in a series of Scriptures and *agadot*: He is vengeful, raging, heavy-hearted, wrathful, deceitful even of those who serve him best, warlike and cruel, capricious and mean to men; he does not even tolerate the protestation of the angels; he dismisses his own angels to a fiery river in hell; he engages in bloody battles against men; in the end, he comes to regret his creation.

Christianity

In his criticism of Christianity (XV), the author first mentions the origin of Christian sects, which is Judaism, and then deals with the Christian mysteries: the Incarnation, Trinity, and Redemption. He quotes from the canonical texts this: « There is one principle, and every thing is through his will. » And he finds it incompatible with the idea of the freedom of will defended by some Christian exegetes like Ephraim. He argues that the New Testament really confirms the existence of two principles, good and evil. And he concludes that: Although Jesus claimed that he had not come to abolish the Laws of Moses, his sayings and commands really dissipate these laws.

Manichaeism

The book of Mardānfarrox ends with this chapter devoted to Manichaeism which contains, according to Franz Cumont, "un exposé très remarquable dans sa concision de la doctrine manichéenne, qu'il combat." (60) The text has been translated and or commented many times –we can name West (1887), Saleman (1904), Jackson (1932), Henning (1934), Hedayat (1943), Menasce (1945), Zaehner (1937-39, 1955), Shakiba (2001), Sundermann (2001), and Taillieu (2003). However, some technical terms of Mardānfarrox's exposition of Mani's cosmology remained "undeciphered", for example the Pazand kunī.

Observations

The transcription of the text, here given, has been made from the Pāzand (compared with Sanskrit version) in the edition by Jāmāsp-Āsānā and West.

Here is the list of existing manuscripts:

AK (belonged to Hōšangji Jāmāspji of Poona; Perhaps written at the latter end of the 15th century) Paz.-Skt., I-XI.

AK₂ (written by Āsadīn son of Kākā, A.D. 1568; Bombay) Paz.-Skt., I-XVI.

BM (add. Or. 22,378 in the British Museum at London) Pārsīg -Farsi, I.

D₅₅ (written A.Y. 1234 by Erachji Sorabji Meherjirana; in the Mulla Feroz Library at Bombay) Paz.- Pārsīg, I-V.

D₅₆ (written by Kavus Manuchihrji; in the Mulla Feroz Library at Bombay) Pārsīg, I-V.

Dm (written A.D. 1756; given to Darmesteter by Hoshangji Kavusji, from the library of his late father Dastur Kavusji Darabji; Suppl. Pers. 1186 in the National Library at Paris) Pārsīg -Paz., I-V.

E₃₁ (written A.Y. 1275; in the Meherji Rana Library at Navsari) Pārsīg -Paz., I-V.

F₃₄ written A.Y. 1235 by Erachji; in the Meherji Rana Library at Navsari) Pārsīg -Paz., I-V.

JE (written A.D. 1842, by Jamshedji Edalji; belonged to Hōshangji Jāmāspji of Poona) Paz.-Skt., I-XVI.

JJ (written A.D. 1768, by Jamshedji Jāmāsp-āsā; belonged to Khurshedji Jamshedji of Navsari) Paz.-Skt., I-XVI.

K₉ (see Sheriarji D. Bharucha) Paz.-Gujarati.

K₁₀ (see Sheriarji D. Bharucha) Paz.-Skt.-Gujarati.

K₁₁ (see Sheriarji D. Bharucha) Pārsīg -Paz.-Skt.

K₂₈ (written about A.D. 1737; in the University Library at Copenhagen) Pārsīg -Paz.-Skt., I-IV, VIII-XI.

L₁₅ (written about A.D. 1737; in the India Office Library at London) Pārsīg, I-V.

L₂₃ (the handwriting is the same as that in L₁₅; in the India Off. Lib.) Paz., I-VIII.

M₂₃ (a copy of PA₁₈).

MH₁₉ (No. 19 of the Haug Collection in the State Library at Munich: M64) Paz.-Gujarati, I-XI.

PA₁₈ (belonged to Anquetil du Perron²; in the form of a roll; Suppl. Pers. 42 in the National Library at Paris) Paz.- Pārsīg, I-V.

PB₃ (Copied from a copy of AK; No. 3 of the Burnouf Collection in the National Library at Paris, given to Burnouf by Manekji Khurshedji of Bombay) Paz.-Skt., I-X.

² « Scheken /ou Schekand/ Goumani:Roulot Pehlvi & Persan, en bon état & bien écrit. Dans ce Traité, dont le nom signifie ‘le doute brisé’, le Persan est écrit en caractere Zend sur le Pehlvi ; mais la plûpart des mots Pehlvis un peu difficiles sont simplement écrits sur le Pehlvi en caractes Zends sans traduction. Le *Scheken Goumani* est un ouvrage Théologique & Moral, dont l’objet principal est d’établir que la mal ne vient pas d’Ormuzd ; que l’impureté d’Ahriman a sa source dans lui-même, ainsi que celle de l’homme dans sa propre volonté. L’Auteur, pour prouver ces deux points, entre dans quelques détails sur l’origine des êtres ; il parle du Ciel, des Astres, de la nature de l’homme, des différens états qui partagent le Genre humain ; il pose pour principe fondamental de la Morale, la pureté de pensée, la pureté de parole, la pureté d’action, & recommande surtout d’honorer Dieu & de pratiquer la Loi de Zoroastre. Cet Ouvrage commence par ces mots : *vispann Ihan minvadan setihan* etc. Il finit par ceux-ci, qui sont sur le revers du roulot : *avadih o rastih din avaradar ena anitounad* ». (A. du Perron, *Zend-Avesta*, t. premier, xl)

PB9 (« Fragment du Schaken goumani en Pazend et en Sanscrit copié d'après le manuscrit que m'a donné Manakjî Cursetjî ». Written by Burnouf : Papiers d'E Burnouf, in the National Library at Paris, No. 9) Paz.-Skt., I.

R (given to J. Romer by a Dastur in Surat; see Müller 10 in the State Library at Munich & the India Office Library at London) Pārsīg -Paz.-Skt.-Farsi, I-V.

T48 (Manuscript presented by Sorabji Framji Meherjana; in the Meherji Rana Library at Navsari) Pārsīg -Paz., I-IV; Persic-Paz.

No manuscript is complete. The most complete Mss., JJ and JE, break off abruptly at XVI.111 before the critical portion of the chapter on Manichaeism is completed. We do not know how much of the original text is lost.

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